

31. (Once Amended) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein pressure-sensitive adhesive layer comprises an adhesive selected from natural rubber adhesives, synthetic rubber adhesives, acrylic adhesives, vinyl acetate adhesives, urethane adhesives, and mixtures thereof.

REMARKS

Applicant affirms the election made during a telephone conversation with the Examiner on February 4, 2002, wherein claims 18-34 were elected to prosecute without traverse. Thus, please delete claims 1-17 and 35-54 which are drawn to the non-elected invention.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 31 has been rejected by the PTO under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, in claim 31, line 2, after the word "layer" the word "is" is requested to be deleted. In response, Applicant has deleted the word "is" as requested in claim 31, to alleviate the objection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 18-34 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,194,064 (*Keely et al.*) in view of the admitted art. The Official Action states that *Keely et al.* shows all the features of the claimed invention except for the specific pressure requirement to crush the non-adhesive particles of the barrier layer and the tackiness of the pressure sensitive adhesives. The PTO asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary